Frank Ragano

Post 5/17/98

Lawyer

Frank Ragano, 75, a lawyer who defended reputed mob figures and wrote a book that claimed to link organized crime to the assassination of President Kennedy, was found dead May 13 at his home in Tampa, Fla. Tampa police said death was from natural causes and no foul play was suspected.

Mr. Ragano long represented Santo Trafficante, the reputed Mafia boss of Florida, who died in 1987. Mr. Ragano also was at the side of Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa in a Nashville courtroom in 1964 when the labor leader was shot three times by an air pistol. His other clients included such celebrities as Burt Reynolds, Liberace, Dinah Shore and Rocky Marciano.

Mr. Ragano retired from his law practice in 1992, the same year he told the New York Post that he believed he took a 1963 Kennedy assassination order from Hoffa to Trafficante and New Orleans mob boss Carlos Marcello. In 1994, Mr. Ragano and New York Times reporter Selwyn Raab published the memoirs of the lawyer who had been a "mob mouthpiece" for over 30 years.